

Crescendo

by yakfrost

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Summary: Jack is an orphan. Hiccup is an inventor. Both are longing to live a life far outside of their reach, and an unlikely meeting sends the two falling for each other. Circumstances change for them both, however, once General Pitch arrives at the city of Burgess, bearing plans to take it over along with Berk and Dunbroch. The key to Pitch's success? Jack Frost, of course.

1. Prologue

Hi folks! I posted this story on tumblr first and it was well received. Decided to post it here for easy reading and to expand the audience, although I know most of you are probably going to be from tumblr, lmao. Anyways, I finally managed to get this up on this website.

So uh, I really like Hijack/Frostcup, and my life currently revolves around Hiccup, Jack Frost, Merida and Rapunzel being bffs, so this story is kind of the product of it.

this is a fantasy/steampunk-ish AU set in some really dumb universe, idk, i'm pretty much making this world up as I go along - but regardless of that, this idea came to me in the middle of the night a while ago and over the course of the week I began jotting down notes.

Hopefully everyone will enjoy what I have to offer!

* * *

><p>Chapter Overview

Rating: K+

Words: 2,360

****Author Notes:**** I'm sorry if this is poop and a tad bit boring, but I wrote this at 2 am and I'm trying to set up the story. I know you all know who Jamie, Sophie, Emma and Cupcake are, but I'm not sure if you know Jamie's other friends - Caleb, Claude, Monty and Pippa. I suggest you look them up before reading.

* * *

><p>Prologue

"I got the job at North's Emporium, dad."

Maybe Stoick would care, maybe he wouldn't.

"Hmmpf."

Oh. That disgruntled, one syllable response I hear on an hourly basis. Chances are he probably still doesn't like me working at a toy shop when I'm supposed to be using my talent to make weapons.

North's Emporium is the largest toy store on earth, and it doubles as a store and a factory. The workers? Yetis. North has expelled a favorite childhood myth of mine and graciously informed me that elves don't do anything but serve milk and baked goods.

The thing about North is that he's literally the best inventor I've known in my entire sixteen years of living on this planet.

I first got in contact with North back in Berk, days before moving. I was looking for a job to help get me started in Burgess, and hopefully working for someone who loved to bring joy to people of all ages would be the job for me.

Much to my surprise, he was looking for someone with as great of an imagination as he had to come up with designs for new toys. And somehow, after looking at several of my sketchbooksâ€|I got the job. I honestly have no idea what he sees in me, because North's toys are one of the most creative and innovative pieces of technology I have ever had the pleasure of coming across. I'd be lucky to have some of his genius rub off on me when I begin to work for him.

â€|That is, if my father doesn't pull me out of the job himself and chain me to a pole in my room or something. Stoick is stubborn, and he will not back down from a fight, no matter what kind it is.

That's kind of why I gave up fighting for my personal freedom a long time ago.

"So, uh. I start tomorrowâ€|"

"Go away, Hiccup, I'm busy."

â€|And, well. Life is always throwing one challenge after the other at me. No break. No mercy. Justâ€|hit after hit. Much like how Stoick's words usually impact me.

I left my father's office without a word and headed straight for my own quarters.

My name is Hunter Haddock III, and not only am I the son of the Baron of Berk, but I'm the heir to a large steam ship and weaponry company that I really, really don't want to inherit.

I now go by "Hiccup," a substitute name of sorts for "Hunter" that was given to me because I'm not the tough, brawny guy my father had imagined me to be since I was first conceived.

My father, Stoick the Vast, is the head of Viking, a very wealthy company. We moved to Burgess to expand the company's outreach. Although he often lets me know how disappointed he is in me and tells me consistently that I shouldn't be his son- and seriously means it - he still expects me to be the one to take his seat at the head of it once he passes on or retires.

You see, I can't fight. I don't really do wars. I'm a scrawny teenager. But the Viking company? It's all about conquering lands and fighting, hence the name. Ever since this whole imperialism thing kicked in, everything is about taking other people's stuff. And I just don't want that kind of company in my hands.

What I'd rather do is ride dragons for the rest of my life.

Dragons are my favorite animals, and, obviously, the center of my life. They live mainly on Berk, where - surprise surprise - we train and ride dragons. They're not as dangerous as they seem.

I should mention that I have a dragon named Toothless. A Night Fury, to be more specific; the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself. Toothless and I have a bond unlike any other. We've been through so much together - including the destruction of a gigantic Green Death that threatened to destroy my city - and it's almost as if we're brothers.

Where's the problem in all this?

Well, the funny thing about dragons is that no one outside Berk actually likes dragons. Everyone else fears them. And the technology and :weapons of my father's company are being used to slay these creatures.

And he doesn't even seem to care.

My father requested I leave Toothless behind when we moved - and so I did, to both protect myself and Toothless. I can visit him at the end of every week, but not being able to see him every day will be difficult. He won't be there to support me when I need it.

It's practically a miracle how, in spite of everything, I still manage to put one foot in front of the other.

I arrived at my room, anticipating the comforting feeling of a soft bed beneath my body.

A window extended across a great portion of my room. I had the luxury of being able to overlook Burgess from the flying ship my father had designed himself. He named it Thor, after the Norse god of thunder - very fitting, as my father was one to make everything asgardian-sized.

Burgess was beautiful at night from where I was standing, and I could feel the excitement that went on within the confines of the city borders just by observing it. I've heard how enchanting of a city it is, with people and cultures and creatures and beings of all kinds residing in it. The thought of exploring it sent shivers down my spine.

I looked down at Burgess, staring long and hard at the buildings below, and in that moment I came upon the realization that the city had so much to offer - so much to give. It felt as if something had been _waiting _for me to arrive. Likeâ€|the city wanted me there. It didn't matter what I was going through at the moment - I just knew that Burgess was where I needed to be.

The moon seemed to glow brighter upon this thought, and I smiled softly. Thoughts of tomorrow began flooding my head and bringing me some much needed, temporary satisfaction with myself.

For once, I felt resolved.

* * *

><p>You can never get a break when your name is Jackson Overland Frost. Not in Burgess, at least.</p>

I stared out the window, gazing at the city I was born and raised in. The city of Burgess never sleeps - it's always bustling, always busy. It was nearly the same view I saw every night, and only thing that remotely stuck out to me was the new billboard advertisement for _Viking's_ flying steam ship and weaponry company.

A giant red headed man with a large beard was on the sepia screen, chatting away about the various sizes of ships and all the different new weapons he had to offer for taking down werewolves and dragons and other terrifying monsters only found in areas outside Burgess.

Baron Stoick the Vast was his name I think. He'd been on the news often latelyâ€|apparently he was the Baron of Berk - a settlement more commonly known as the City of Dragons - and the Baron and his son moved to town to establish their embassy here.

More rich to take up space for the poor.

I sighed and hopped off the windowsill, facing the scene of my sister playing with the other orphans I had grown to love and call my family.

Cupcake was snuggled up in an arm chair reading an old fairytale about a unicorn, the small pink bow adorning her hair moving up and down as she giggled. Monty was in the next seat, messing with some sort of contraption he pulled out of a boxed set, and Claude and Caleb were both enthusiastically chatting about what they'd do if they owned a steambot. Pippa was quietly browsing through the old bookshelf next to them - books she's probably read ten times before, but the orphanage didn't have much to offer.

My eyes fell upon Emma and Jamie, playing with a stuffed dragon and what appeared to be Sophie's fairy doll. Sophie was clinging to

Jamie, curious about what they were roleplaying. "Beauty and the Beast. She just turned the prince into a dragon." Emma told her, and Sophie clapped her hands.

It would have been a very warm and comforting scene if I hadn't known that Mother Gothel would be storming into the den soon. It would be 9:45. She'd shoo them all off to bed and then sneak out to go get herself a couple of drinks at the pub a couple of blocks away.

Life in Mother Gothel's orphanage wasn't so bad once you knew how the woman herself operated. I had spent six years in the dreadful building under her miserable care, albeit thankful that I had a decent place to live.

I was placed into the orphanage with my younger sister Emma at the tender age of eleven. We were the first to be placed in the renovated building at the time, since it'd been recently put into the hands of Mother Gothel.

My parents lost their lives due a rare illness, unfortunately. I still dwell on it to this day. But because Emma was only two years old when she lost them, I'd made myself a life-long promise to protect her with my life, and to serve as her parental figure. No one else was fit the job anyway - and no one else is fit for the job today either. In case it wasn't clear before, Mother Gothel isn't really that much of a mother.

It's why I'm aiming to get rich once I leave this place. I want to put all these children into safe homes or into the best orphanages, they can't live their life like I did.

The problem with my brilliant plan, though, is that there's no way I can set it off.

I'm notorious among the lower class of Burgess - my 'annoying' desire to have fun whenever possible and my ever strong, thrill-seeking personality has gotten me into trouble with many people. My track record caught up with me, and in the worst possible way - no one will employ me in fear that I might cause trouble for the people I'd have to work with. It's completely fair to come to the conclusion that I brought that on myself.

So I'm seventeen, penniless and without a job. The biggest problem I currently face, however, would be my next birthday - once I turn eighteen, I will be kicked out the orphanage. I won't be able to care for myself, and worse - I won't be able to care for Emma and Jamie and Sophie and all the other orphans I would never dream of leaving in Mother Gothel's hands. Alone.

I cringed at my own thoughts, and as if on cue, Mother Gothel pranced into the room.

"Alright, bed time, everyone! Mumsy's got many things to do tomorrow, and she doesn't need you awake to interfere with them." The dark haired woman pinched Sophie's cheek. "Goodnight, sweetheart," She cooed, before Sophie forced herself from Gothel's hold and darted up the stairs.

I was the only one left in the room with Gothel, picking up the toys the others neglected to clean up. It wasn't a problem. Kids will be

kids.

The worst part about the silence was that I could hear Gothel approaching me from behind. It almost made me shudder.

"You are entirely too nice, Jack. Especially for one of your age and nature," Gothel commented, crossing her arms.

"I guess you could say that," I replied. I didn't want to talk to her.

"It's really a shame you can't find a job to support yourself."

I clutched the stuffed dragon in my hand in anger. My day always ended like this. With her talking about my future and the like. "You don't need to remind me of my failures all the time," I didn't turn to face her as I picked up one of Claude's toy race cars, "It'd be really nice if you could support me, though. You don't need to pay me anything, just putting in a nice word for one of the people at the bar you go to every night would earn me a spot as a bartender."

I turned just in time to see the expression on her face, and I smirked. "I know about your drinking problem, Gothel. And I know that the people of Burgess would not stand for someone who leaves kids home alone while theyâ€""

"Quiet, Jack. Whatever you're saying is complete nonsense." The dark haired woman looked at me in contempt. "And I am your mother, boy. You will refer to me as such."

I closed my mouth. I knew when I said enough to get her to stop putting me down.

She sighed, rubbing her temples, and her angered expression fell away. "Anyway, I will be gone for the next three days, contrary to your belief. I have to visit a friend of mine with whom I have business with. He's taken an interest in adopting one of his ownâ€|and he's quite wealthy." She smirked. I stared at her, because I couldn't believe it. She was actually leaving the orphanage for our benefit.

"I trust you will watch them for me. There should be enough food to last you that long for three days, but I left some money on my desk in my office if you should need it." Mother Gothel continued, putting on her shawl.

I only nodded, attempting to conceal my happiness at this news.

"Go on upstairs, and don't wake them up and tell them where I've gone until the morning. I have some last minute packing to do before I leave for the train," She tousled my head of hair, and I scowled. She simply grinned. "Goodnight."

With a twist of her heel, she was gone.

I sprinted up the steps and into my room, anticipating the next day's events as I pictured them in my head. Mother Gothel was gone, and that provided us with the much deserved and needed freedom we craved since the beginning of our lives at the orphanage.

I flopped onto my flimsy mattress, sinking into the worn furniture and staring at the ceiling with what I was sure was a very stupid grin.

I felt like doing something amazing for the children - something that would make them smile from ear to ear, and something Mother Gothel definitely wouldn't dream of doing.

And that was it.

I was going to take all of the kids downtown shopping with Mother Gothel's money.

2. Initium

Wow, thanks for the reviews so far, I really appreciate them!

just a heads up: i put up character designs and some other art for this story, and if you'd like to check it out, visit my tumblr! it's linked in my sidebar.

* * *

><p>Chapter Overview

Rating: K+

Words: 4, 840

Author Notes: i edited this chapter a bit so it's different from tumblr's version. there's some evil scheming. we do some exploring of Burgess and meet Toothiana. also, Hiccup and Jack meet for the first time.

* * *

><p>"Dinner by the light of the moon, and only the light of the moon," Gothel chanted, gazing out the window. "Romantic, wouldn't you say?"

An elongated table sat in the middle of an empty room, with two tall chairs placed at either end. The figures resting in them had less than good intentions.

The dark figure sitting across from Gothel on the other side of the table chuckled. "You amuse me, Gothel. This is merely the lighting I prefer to eat under."

Gothel took a long sip at the wine in her hands. "Right. Well. I promise you, Pitch, this boy is the perfect candidate. He was one of the first to show up once I had reopened the building."

"No need to make promises, dear Gothel," Pitch replied. "I believe you well enough. You say this boy desires to rise from his place among the lower class?"

"More than anything." Gothel said. "He has a sister, you know. And he only wants the best for her and the orphans."

"I believe that can work to our advantage." The figure smiled, the crooked teeth behind them revealing themselves.

Gothen nodded, shifting around what was left of the beverage in her glass.

It's strange and bit too far fetched upon first glance, but adopting Jack in order to take over three entire cities from the inside was a flawless plan - especially under Pitch's management.

Gothen knew, however, that Pitch was one to use fear in order to reel in followers and coerce even the strongest to submit, and because of that, she knew the General's final move in this plan would result in one of the most...terrifying confrontations, possibly in the history of Burgess, Berk and Dunbroch combined.

Gothen wasn't sure how to make sense of it by herself, but Pitch had such a corrupted and black aura that a supernatural force of some sort seemed to be present within him. Shadows radiated off the man and demons likely followed his every move.

And somewhere in Gothen's mind, she could feel it. She could feel something prodding in the back of her mind. She was worried - worried that she got so much more than she bargained for when agreeing to help the General, and now there was no turning back.

"Pitch, I must ask you," Mother Gothen placed her glass down on the table. "How come you're not worried about anyone finding out before this happens? Or the military response to everything, once it's all said and done?"

"Why must you doubt me?" Pitch's grin disappeared as he leaned forward, the moon casting light to the haunting features on his face. "Do you not know what I've done in my years as a general?"

Gothen remained silent, eyes wide and brimmed with fright.

That supernatural force was present.

"Do you not know this power I possess?"

The walls seemed to close in on Gothen, the shadows surrounding her soon after. Gothen retreated back into her chair, fear settling deep within her. She remained quiet, anxious under the general's stare.

Pitch smirked once again. "No one will expect a thing."

* * *

><p>"But do we have to visit Toothiana?" Monty whined, tugging on Jack's sleeve.

"Yes, she's a great friend of mine." Jack said, "She's gotten me out of trouble more times than I can count!"

"She's always lookin' at our teeth all weird, though," Claude said.

The morning after Mother Gothen fled in the middle of the night was

quite the beautiful one - even literally speaking. Jack woke up to singing birds and cooked breakfast for everyone, bringing the pleasant news to the other orphans along with a nice, filling meal to the table.

Although the amount wasn't very much, Mother Gothel left him some money and told him that he was free to spend it however he wanted.

At least that's how he interpreted it.

"And it's just a dumb jewelry shop, not like I'll see anything interesting in there." Caleb added, making movements with his hands.

Cupcake crossed her arms. "Maybe some of us like the pretty necklaces, Caleb." Caleb shrunk backwards, and Jack found himself intervening.

"Okay, okay. If it makes it any better, we can visit Bunnymund's afterwards andâ€""

And of course the first mention of Bunnymund's Chocolate Shop was followed by multiple voices shouting together in glee. Jack rolled his eyes and shrugged. "It's decided, then."

He was trying to avoid having to face the pooka-hybrid on a day like today, but he'd do anything to make the children happy. Even if it meant having to argue with someone who grated at your every nerve most of the time.

Jack pushed on the front door of Toothiana's Jewelry Parlor, and the tiny bell at the top jingled with the movement. He held the door open, gesturing for the children to walk in before him.

"Tooth?â€|Tooth, are you here?"

The muffled crash of an object that was probably made of something valuable replied. The shuffling of various boxes could also be heard before the door to the storage unit was opened, and Toothiana's round face was revealed. Her head poked out from behind the wooden door, earrings moving with every slight of her head.

She seemed to pause to assess the state of the room before recognizing who was present. "Jack!" Her wings fluttered and she sped forward to wrap her arms around him. "It's so good to see you! I haven't seen you in a few weeks. What happened?"

"Uh, well," He chuckled. "I haven't really left the orphanage much sinceâ€|you knowâ€|the whole thing withâ€|"

"Elliot?" Toothiana asked, "He's still pretty ticked off about it, you know."

"Stubborn kangaroo. I figured as much," Jack replied, looking down at Emma. "I brought the others this time!"

"I know!" She squealed in excitement, looking at the others. "And they've been good, I trust?" The children all nodded their

head.

Sophie laughed and pointed at Toothiana. "Pretty!"

"Oh my, thank you, dear, Iâ€" The fairy came to a stop, and gasped. "Wait. Something's off."

She looked around the room. "Mother Gothel isn't here."

Tooth was a busy body, and she was definitely the type of person to overlook many things due to her speedy schedule, including someone's absence.

"What of it?" Jack asked.

"Where did she go? She usually never lets you out of her sight."

"â€|On a business trip. For three days," Jack said, running fingers through his platinum blonde hair. "I'm taking the kids out for _fun_ for once. It's better than, you know, watching Mother Gothel drool all over your jewelry all day."

"Ah," Tooth said, nodding her head slowly and her expression falling. "I guess they'd much rather not be here, then, if it may remind them of Gothel. I don't even have anything to offer for them toâ€"Oh!" Her entire figure perked up with her words. "I have dental floss in the back somewhere!"

Jack blinked, before laughing. "Tooth, that's really not necessaryâ€|"

I'll be right baaaack~ She flew into another room - her office, where she kept everything handy - and Monty pulled on Jack's sleeve for the second time. "Let's leave now, while we can!"

But Tooth was back in a flash before Jack could respond, and she passed little round, engraved boxes out to everyone in the room. The children raised their eyebrows at these gifts before shoving them in their pockets.

"Floss every day, children! After every meal, if you can!" She put her last case into Jack's hands, and chuckled. "Not sure if you need this, Jack. Your teeth are so white I'm sure you've been doing your job."

The teenager chuckled. "Yeah, wellâ€|I guess we better get going."

At those words, Monty was the first one out the door, and soon the others followed him out with the same haste.

"Okay, Jack." She said to him, eyes glimmering. "If you ever need anything, just call." She placed a hand on his shoulder, and he smiled sincerely at her.

Emma could hear a faint _"take care!"_ as her older brother shut the door. She opened and closed her box of floss a few times before turning to Jack.

"Why is that lady so obsessed with teeth?" She asked. "Every time we go there it's like we're at the dentist."

"I still think it's really weird." Caleb muttered, juggling his floss in his hands. "That's probably why she goes by Miss Toothiana."

"You all are giving her too hard of a time. Think of her asâ€¢ the tooth fairy," Jack said, his arms gesturing towards the sky. "She only wants you to take care of your teeth and treat them like they're your own personal gems, much like how she treats every piece of gold and silver in that shop."

"Huh," Jamie said, already picking at his teeth with the floss. "I've never thought of it that way before. It makes senseâ€¢ Do you think you could get her to give us money when we lose our teeth, too?"

Jack laughed. "Now, _that's_ a good questionâ€¢"

"Jack! We're here!" Pippa pointed at a nearby, glamorously decorated window scene. The borders of the glass were painted with bright colors, and the sign above it displayed the name of the shop in intricately written cursive _Bunnymund's Chocolate Shop._

Behind the window was sample upon sample of the many assortment boxes Bunnymund offered year round - _Strawberry Smiles_, "Truffle Treatment" and _White Chocolate Wonder_ were among the labeled packages they could see, and Jack could sense their mouths watering.

"Chocolate!" Sophie squealed. Jamie held on to her hand and looked up at Jack, expecting him to succumb to their eager innocence.

It worked, of course.

"Alright, alright. I'll buy us all one package," Jack said, happy to receive a positive reaction out of the young orphans. He peered on the inside, however, and Jack both felt an overwhelming sense of relief and disappointment. There were people of all shapes and sizes in every open line, and not a single menu was in his line of vision.

At least he wouldn't have to confront the rabbit so soon.

Jack reluctantly turned and sighed. "â€¢On second thought, guys, it's pretty crowded in there. This'll have to wait another time."

They all immediately frowned, and Claude loudly groaned. "Aw, but it is _so_ worth the wait! I haven't had his chocolate in _months!"

"I highly doubt Bunnymund will have anything you want by the end of this wave of customers, at least not for the next few hours." Jack pointed out. He frowned at their disappointed faces and glanced at the large wall of brick next to Bunnymund's shop. There were many fliers and signs plastered against it, some of new businesses and some of old businesses that had already been long gone.

But something drew him towards a particular poster - it wasn't one of the larger ones, but in spite of its size, it was veryâ€¢_colorful._

"North's Toy Emporium - VISIT TODAY!" was bolded across the top in a visually appealing font along with the address, and the man on the front smiling from ear to ear with flushed cheeks was none other than Santa Claus himself - a nickname North was commonly referred to as.

The Emporium had only been in Burgess for two years, and for both years, it had been a major success - more so than other businesses, it almost seemed. It was no surprise, as the majority of the population of Burgess was under 18. Burgess experienced a baby boom not long after a war ended with an invading country years ago.

Jack had never been to this emporium, however. He had never actually been to that section of the town, since it didn't particularly interest him to come in close contact with the people of the upper class.

Jack was willing to make a few sacrifices this time, though.

"I have an idea." He said, turning towards the others.

Emma took a few steps towards him. "Are we going to the park?"

"No, no - something better. Trust me." Jack reassured his younger sibling before taking her hand in his. "Everyone follow me, I think you're going to like what I'm going to show you."

So going to North's Emporium was actually the perfect idea, and it's a wonder Jack hadn't thought of it before.

He knew from multiple stories from Mr. ManSnoozie and Toothiana that North was a kind and generous soul who appreciated the entire public, and not just the rich. Perhaps Jack would be able to face the looks of disdain from the primped and polished in order to meet this man.

A few blocks later, the children were still confused and Jack was still very much excited. In the distance, Jack could see the multicolored sign on top of a very tall, very large bricked building - complete with lights, fake snow and many decorations ornamenting the structure.

Their steps sped up as they got closer to their destination, and realization began to dawn on the young children.

"Is thatâ€" "

"Whoa! "

"No way." Jamie whispered.

"Yes way." Jack said, crossing his arms as he coasted to a stop.
"North's Toy Emporium."

"North's Toy Emporium," Jamie repeated, gleaming up at the sight.
"Jack, you're amazing!"

Emma remained silent, although her mouth was agape, and her eyes were filled with so much excitement it was a wonder she could contain

herself.

The least Jack could ever ask for was for the spark that appeared in Jamie and Emma's eyes every now and then. He lived for moments like this.

"Is this real life?" Monty asked, pushing his glasses back on top of the bridge of his nose. Pippa, Cupcake and Claude laughed, while Caleb stepped forward to mess with the fake snow in the bushes near the side windows.

Seconds later, a small, lanky boy exited the shop with something covered in his hands. He was wearing what seemed to be an apron and an employee outfit underneath, complete with dark green slacks, a cucumber colored button shirt and brown leather boots.

Jamie was the only one to take notice of this boy as he sat down on the bottom of the steps, slowly pulling off the cover from whatever was in his hands.

Jamie's eyes grew larger in fascination as the blanket was finally removed and stuffed into the boy's side pocket. The object underneath it made him blink twice.

"Whoa!" Jamie exclaimed, pushing past everyone and running towards the steps of the building.

Everyone else was busy gawking at the emporium's decorations - there was a moving train track - but Jack noticed Jamie had run off ahead of them. He was momentarily confused, but followed in Jamie's footsteps, motioning for the others to follow him as well.

Jamie finally caught up to the boy on the steps, smiling from ear to ear.

The employee looked up through brown bangs, revealing freckled cheeks and dark green eyes. "Oh, hey there, can I help y-"

"Is that a dragon?" Jamie asked, excitedly. "Is it?"

The employee chuckled, before pressing a switch on and making the creature come to life. "Yes, that's exactly what it is."

"Does it have a name?" Jamie continued, reaching out to touch it.

"I call it the Terrible Terrorâ€|but as far as an actual name, no. It's just a prototype, I tend not to name them, butâ€|I mean, I _guess_ you could give it a name if you like," The employee handed the dragon to Jamie, and the dragon practically leapt in his arms.

Jamie laughed, letting the dragon crawl up and down his arm span. He turned around in time to see Jack and the others catching up, their mouths immediately dropping open at the scene. "Guys, guys! Check this out, it's a dragon!"

Emma was the first to approach Jamie and the Terrible Terror, an expression of disbelief on her face. "Wow! It's actually moving!"

Jamie laughed as it crawled on top of his head. "I know, it's so cool!"

"Does it breathe fire?" Cupcake asked, poking its nose. The dragon shook its head in response, making her jump slightly.

"Well, noâ€|I made this while thinking of children. Fire breathing dragon robots and children are not a good combination." The employee answered, kneeling down in front of them. Jack looked at him, eyes moving back and forth at the employee and the toy itself, wondering how in the world someone could make anything like that.

"Did you really make this, Misterâ€|?" Claude tried to peer at his name tag. The employee immediately covered it, before taking it off and putting it in his pocket.

"Call me Hiccup," He said, taking the dragon back from Jamie. "Funny name, I know, but I've been going by it ever since I was ten."

Hiccup, Jack said to himself, stepping closer the group. He was being so nice to the kids. He was being really nice to _orphan_ children - not that he even knew, but Hiccup could probably tell of their less than fortunate origins by the way they all dressed.

"Want me to show you something it can do?" Hiccup asked, lifting the dragon up on his arm. He switched on another button on the toy, and the Terrible Terror took flight, causing an array of reactions to be pulled out from the children - and Jack, as well.

Ten seconds of flight wasn't very long, but it ascended back down to the very impressed group of children. All of them lifted their arms to coax it into landing on them, but it sped past them and landed at Jack's feet, rounding his ankles twice before curling up and sitting.

Everyone's eyes eventually fell on Jack, and Jack carefully picked up the bronze creature, bringing it forward to them.

"Did you see that, Jack? Wasn't it really amazing? You can't tell me that wasn't amazing, because it was!" Jamie jumped up and down excitedly, before pointing at Hiccup. "He made that, with his own two hands! Can you believe it?"

Jack laughed at Jamie's elated display of emotions, before turning to Hiccup. "This is really cool what you've made here, Hiccup."

"Thanks," Hiccup said, taking the dragon from Jack's hands. "Granted there are a few issues - such as it powering down after flying - but I'll work out the kinks as time goes by."

"Why do you call it the _Terrible Terror_?" Jamie asked.

Hiccup turned his attention away from the seventeen year old and back to the child, eyes immediately lighting up. "Well, let me let you all in on a little secret," Hiccup said, leaning in closer to the children. "They're all based off of real dragons that live in my hometown, Berk."

And this guy is from Berk, Jack added to his thoughts. _Now I understand the name._

_ "Berk?"_ Pippa asked, tugging at her hat. "The city of dragons?"

"Precisely why it's called that, my dear." Hiccup grinned. "The _Terrible Terror_ is the smallest of all dragons, but don't let that fool you. Unlike this prototype, it actually breathes fire, and its bite could probably give you more than you bargained for."

Hiccup further explained the concept of real life dragons to the children, and Jack watched on as their faces changed with every detail Hiccup revealed about the nearly mythical creatures. As the conversation went on, however, he found himself staring longer and longer at Hiccup.

The enthusiasm in his eyes, the expression in his brow, the curve of his upper lip, the freckles highlighting his face â€“ Jack was starting to pay attention to all of it, and a sinking feeling began to wash over the boy.

A switch turned on somewhere within his mind, and Jack wasn't exactly sure what was happening.

"â€œ|Would you like to come inside?" Hiccup finally inquired, rushing up the steps. "I know you'll find lots of other cool stuff in here."

The orphans hastened towards the door as Hiccup opened it, rushing inside the Emporium as if the greatest thing lay behind those very doors.

In this case, it actually did.

Jack was left standing at the bottom of the doorsteps, a smile still fresh on his face from a fit of laughterhe went through watching Cupcake and Monty nearly get stuck in the doorway. He caught Hiccup's eyes mid glance, and for both of them, everything came to a stop.

Five unbearable seconds of an awkward silence, and Jack shook his head out of a trance. "O-ohâ€œ|Wow, I'm so sorry, Hiccup I'm-I'm a little out of it right now."

"It's fine, it's fine, I justâ€œ|you know, I guess I'm used to it. Er-uh. Well, people being out of it, that is. Maybe." Hiccup ran a hand through his dark brown locks, before sighing. "Sorry, I like to ramble. You're coming in, right?"

"Yes," Jack chuckled, climbing up the steps. "Yes, I'm definitely coming in."

"You first," Hiccup lifted his hand, watching Jack walk in with a half smile on his face. He closed the door behind them both.

Jack looked up in astonishment. This place was literally everything it had advertised.

The foyer was magnificent, and the fact that it was only a foyer

completely mystified Jack. A chandelier hung from the ceiling, casting light upon every corner of the room. The floors were checkered black and white and the walls were dark brown, wooden and shelled - nutcrackers and porcelain dolls rested upon them with years engraved in gold underneath them. A grandfather clock was placed against one of the walls, and it ticked away, interfering with the music that could be heard in the next room. In the center of the foyer was a dark, wooden desk, with maps and fliers on top of it.

"There's a map to this place?" Jack asked, picking up one of them.

"Yeah, well!" Hiccup laughed. "I don't know how it happened, but this place is a lot bigger on the inside. There's even an underground level."

Jack raised an eyebrow at Hiccup. "But how?"

Hiccup laughed, immediately looking down. Eyes as blue as his shouldn't be legal. "I'm not sure how to describe it, but I guess you could say there's something really magical about North."

Jack only nodded, and eventually walked towards the hall to the right of them. "Where do you think they went?"

Hiccup shrugged. "I don't know." Jack made a face at Hiccup, and Hiccup coughed. "Uh, I mean- I don't know, but it shouldn't be hard to find them."

"Okay," Jack continued walking forward, pointing down the lengthy way. "I think the most of them would be in the room of stuffed animals, so let's go catch up to them."

As soon as he said something, Jamie came rushing down the hallway, a stuffed brown bunny in his hands. "C'mon Jack, I want you to see something! You too, Hiccup."

"Where's Emma?" Jack asked, a bit concerned.

"Oh, she's with Cupcake and Sophie messing around with the stuffed animals." Jamie waved his hand. "The others are messing with the steambots and stuff."

Jack nodded, following Jamie further down the hall.

After an extended period of silence aside from Jamie's happy humming, Jack turned to glance at Hiccup. "Hey, uh. I know your name, but you don't know my name. It's Jack. Jack Frost."

Hiccup blinked. "Like the -"

"Yes, yes, like the myth. I used to think it was cool, but now people actually make fun of it."

"Really? How?"

Jack sighed. "People around my neighborhood sing 'little Jack Frost, get lost, get lost!' and stuff like that. Best part about it is that they actually mean it."

"That's not very nice, people wanting you to go away like that. Sounds a lot like what I go through, actually!" Hiccup trailed off.

Jack turned around, but continued to walk backwards. "What do you go through?" It wasn't hard to figure out from his frame, but he decided he'd ask to be polite.

"Uh, um. Well I," Hiccup stumbled over his words in mix of laughter. "I'm not entirely keen on telling you that part of my life just yet but â€"agh!"

Being caught up in conversation pretty much drew Hiccup's attention from his surroundings and onto Jack Frost. Obviously he wouldn't have noticed the fact that there was a long, cotton-filled snake conveniently placed in front of him for his foot to land on. How Jack managed not to trip over it, Hiccup didn't know, but gravity was pulling down on his being fast, especially with the metal dragon in his arms.

Jack reacted on instinct. He did the first thing that came to mind and that was to valiantly swoop the skinny boy (he appeared skinnier than him, somehow - so fragile, why does he even leave his house?) into his arms.

The instant he saw Hiccup close his eyes and scrunch up his nose, there was an ache in his chest. The details in his expression were almost endearing. It wasn't humanly possible for someone to be this awkward and this cute and justâ€|Hiccup.

Jack really didn't know what the hell he was thinking about, so he stopped thinking altogether.

Meanwhile, sturdy arms held Hiccup up, and he hesitated to open his eyes, because he knew exactly who it was who saved him from permanent brain damage.

He was in such close proximity to this boy - who was, oddly enough, cold to the touch - that he knew that having Jack's bright blue eyes boring into his would be something akin to pure torture.

"U-Uh, Hiccup? It's okay, you didn't fall."

And Hiccup opened his eyes.

Dammit.

Clouding up his line of vision was the absolute perfection that was Jack Frost's face - flawless pale skin, a strong, angled jaw, and the deepest blue eyes Hiccup had ever had the pleasure of gazing into. Which was actually never, aside from the times he had a staring contests with the girls and guys back home, but that's another story for another day.

He shifted his gaze to the room. Everyone else was staring at them - and Jamie, the closest, seemed to have a hint of a smirk on his face. Did he think it was funny? Because it wasn't.

Jack lifted Hiccup up onto his feet, patting his back a little. Both

seemed to feel like it increased the tension between them.

"Y-you okay?" Jack asked, as Hiccup dusted himself off.

"What-oh. Yep! Yeah, I'm fine. Totally great. Just a little shaken, no big deal. I'm glad you caught me. You saved me from a life of eternal pain. Or death. You knowâ€|ahaha." Hiccup held his prototype closer to his torso.

"â€|Can we see the dragon again?" Monty asked.

Hiccup sighed in relief, at least it was something to get his mind off of whatever just happened. "Sureâ€|sure thing, guys."

Jamie and Jack both watched him make his way over to the others, Jack staring intensely at him and Jamie switching his view in between the both of them.

Jamie's eyes widened, and not a moment later, a huge, toothy grin spread across his face. "Jackâ€|"

The tone of Jamie's voice made Jack wonder if he _really_ wanted to know what was going to come out of his mouth next. "What?"

The younger boy giggled. "If I didn't know any better, I'd think you really fancy mister dragon boy over there."

Jack vocalized some sort of choke-chuckle hybrid. Jamie's grin only increased in size.

"Iâ€|I really want to know what made you come to that conclusion."

"I just know, okay? I'm very observant for an 8 year old."

"I know you well enough to believe that you're teasing me right now. We've only just met. That's ridiculous."

And Jack didn't know if he was lying to himself or not. To be quite honest, he wasn't sure what to make of what he felt while witnessing how Hiccup interacted with the kids, or what he felt when he began to ramble on and on to Jamie about dragons. He wasn't sure what to make of the overwhelming sensation he felt throughout his body when coming in close contact with the freckled boy. It was puzzling, and almost _alarming_ to him.

Maybe he was just getting a cold.

Jamie looked down at his hands, playing with his thumbs a bit. "All those stories you've told me about love at first sight, and you say it's ridiculous? Whatever you say, Jack."

Jack didn't respond to Jamie's words - he couldn't, because he was rendered speechless. He forgot how well of a counterargument Jamie could make.

The seventeen year old rubbed the back of his neck, averting his gaze back to the freckled inventor. He was showing Emma the teeth of the _Terrible Terror._ Emma watched him point out every screw and scrap of metal with curious, eager, honey-brown eyes.

What Jack least expected was for Hiccup to lift his head. His eyes immediately fell on Jack's face, and the eye contact lasted for a whole three seconds before Jack managed to look the other way.

And the epiphany seemed to swallow Jack at that very instant.

He really did like him.

He liked his freckles and his hair that changed colors with every room he entered. He liked his lopsided grin and the nervous laughter he grew fond of after only minutes of knowing him.

He liked this lanky teenager, who was somewhat clumsy, but kind enough to invite them all inside in spite of their ragged appearance. He liked how well he could engage with the kids he called family, how well he responded to their questions, how well he treated them.

He especially liked his name - Hiccup. He wasn't even sure if that was his real name or if his parents had decided to name their son after a bodily function, but regardless, the name suited him in the oddest way.

Jack was fascinated by Hiccup. And Jack knew that this fascination would lead him to wanting to know so much more.

"Jamie," Jack started, "I think we're going to be paying a lot more visits here in the future."

* * *

><p>hope you liked it. this'll probably be updated within the next week or so - i have a new beta reader, so the process might take a bit longer than it usually would.</p>

3. Praline

A/N: Hey guys! it's been almost 10 years since I last updated
wow

i've been pretty busy writing essays and doing projects, studying for tests...blah blah blah. you know, life. i've only managed to draw some things and that's the extent of how productive i've been concerning my fanworks

this next chapter introduces a lot of new things, and i kinda hope it doesn't overwhelm you guys. also only half of this is beta'd, so. yeah. it's my fault haha

many thanks to hiraethed on tumblr for being my lovely beta!

* * *

><p>"Three days," The blonde girl whispered to herself, scrawling something across a blank page. "Another business trip..."</p>

She sighed, dropping the pen next to the notebook on her desk. She tucked a strand of hair behind her ear before turning towards the glass paned window across the room.

Rapunzel was her name, and that was all she knew.

After a life of moving from city to countryside to city and being locked up in every spare room, every attic of every home she's ever been in, her name was the only thing she could cling to and still be aware that she was someone. Human.

She could paint landscapes of scenes portrayed in the books Mother Gothel had given her, and she could rearrange walls by painting murals of various images she had retained in her memory. Her hobby was her only escape.

Her eighteenth birthday was approaching, and every single reminder hurt Rapunzel. She had spent her whole life locked away, and now she was becoming an adult. She was beginning to think that she might grow old and rot away in the very place she had grown to loathe.

She glared at the window. The glass was what separated her from the outside world. Her freedom.

At one point in time, she had believed Mother Gothel was doing this to protect her - "Criminals, illnesses and all those natural disasters, Rapunzel - must I keep reminding you that this is for your own good?" - but in recent months, she had become suspicious. Was the world really that terrible if Mother Gothel kept going out so often? What about the people that wrote all of her favorite books? The people that invented the recipes she followed so often? Her favorite artists? Were they really that bad?

Mother Gothel's visits had been limited only to combing out her hair while she sung her healing incantation lately. It was a process that restores youth using the power of Rapunzel's extremely long, golden tresses.

Yes, Rapunzel's hair had supernatural properties - her hair had the remarkable ability to reverse time. This included both the injuries and the age of living things. She had no idea why her hair could do this, but she did know that the power she offered was very valuable, as Mother Gothel had made it clear to her years ago.

Regardless, Rapunzel felt as if becoming a part of this...terrible society Mother Gothel often talks about wouldn't necessarily be as bad as she was making it out to be. If Mother Gothel could function out there without getting killed, then it was possible for her to function - or at least learn to - out there, and she was quite sure that being locked up forever was some form of cruel and unusual treatment.

Rapunzel approached the window. The view she had of the countryside was incredible.

And it hit her quite forcefully - a heavy feeling began to wash over her, causing her fingers to bend at their joints while they were pressed against the window, the slight of her fingernails creating a light scratching noise against the transparent substance.

Her breath hitched watching the clouds pass in the distance. She suddenly felt the overwhelming desire to experience the feeling of the wind flowing through her hair; the impact of the need to witness

a sunset while overlooking the expanse of a valley was like nothing else she had ever felt before.

Never in her life had she wished for something more than she had in that moment.

And never in her life had anything pushed her to cry as heavily as she did that night.

* * *

><p>Jack tossed what was left of his money onto the counter, and Bunnymund raised a large eyebrow at him.</p>

Jack sighed. "Look, Bunnymund...all I'm asking is for you to cut me some slack. I just want a nice treat for the orphans, they haven't had anything nice in a long time, especially since Mother Gothel -"

"Fine, fine kid. Whatever. But if you pull anything like you did a few weeks ago again, I will not be so quick to oblige."

Jack nodded his head, grinning from ear to ear. "Thanks, cottontail."

"Call me that again and I'll toss this entire pot of hot chocolate on ya without a second thought."

"Right, right...let me go fetch the boxes I want and I'll be back to check them out."

Elliot rolled his eyes as he returned to his tray of large, heart shaped dark chocolate candies, a favorite among his customers. "Gotta say, it was pretty wise of ya to visit me before store hours," He said, trying to strike up conversation. He really couldn't stand an awkward, silent atmosphere when they were the only two in a room.

Jack chuckled. "Yeah, well, had not Toothiana bat her pretty little eyelashes at you, you would have slammed the door in my -"

"Shut it, Frost, you're treading dangerous territory." Elliot gave him a look, which only received a shrug and a smirk from Jack as he picked up his next box.

Elliot made a face as he set down the arranged tray in the display window, glancing across the street at Toothiana's quaint little jewelry shop. He had taken a liking to her ever since she first moved here from India.

Of course, his life would be happier if she hadn't stared at Jack with the same admiration that Elliot held in his own eyes for her.

It was completely stupid to hold a bit of a grudge against Jack for being the boy Toothiana was smitten with, but it was the truth. And how could she not be? He was quite the looker, if Elliot did say so himself.

Jack wasn't aware of the small crush she had on him, and that was

apparent by the way he brushed off her compliments. One of Jack's life goals - as he so loudly proclaimed to Bunnymund before - was to get Bunnymund to ask Toothiana out for a night in the town.

And Elliot wants to appreciate Jack. He really does. But that mischievous side of him always manages to further hinder his positive opinion of the teenager.

He figured he'd appreciate him eventually.

"Hey, Bunnymund?" Jack asked, approaching the counter with the currency and the boxes in his hands. "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

Elliot's long left ear twitched visibly. "Ya just did."

"Smartass."

"Go on and shoot."

Jack chuckled, before handing the money to the Pooka. "Well...I know you're kind of close to North from North's Emporium, right?"

"Yep, what of it?"

"...Do you know of a boy named Hiccup?"

"Hiccup? You mean that new stick of an employee of his?" Bunnymund laughed, before crossing his arms. "Yeah, he's a nice boy. The son of the Baron of Berk too. How do you know him anyways?"

Jack blinked. "Son of the Baron of Berk?"

"Yes..."

Jack seemed to space out for a bit. _Of course,_ it all made sense - the Baron of Berk had just moved to Burgess and Hiccup mentioned yesterday that he recently started working for North.

He was crushing on the _son_ of the _Baron of Berk_.

>

Whoa.

"Uhm..." Jack laughed, turning back around. "I didn't know that. But yes..." He found it unnecessarily hard to continue on with his next sentence, "I need you to do me a huge favor."

Elliot sighed. "And what would that be...?"

Jack handed him a small, heart shaped box from behind his back and a piece of paper. "Do you mind delivering this to him with this note?"

Elliot's eyes widened. A heart shaped box and a note? Well.

That was a surprise. He could care less about who he was attracted to, but what startled him about this request was that he didn't know

Jack..._hung out_ on that side of the fence.

Elliot looked at the items in his hands before taking them from him and reading through the letter. His facial expression shifted from confused, to surprised and right back to confused as he read every line, before lowering the letter and raising an eyebrow at Jack.
"What exactly are ya tryin' to pull here, kid?"

Jack rubbed the back of his head. "I don't know."

"That makes two of us."

The younger of the two shook his head and sighed. "No, but really, Bunnymund, it'd mean the world to me if you gave it to him."

"Are you trying to prank him?"

"No!" Jack exclaimed, "No...just. Can you just give it to him, please? I really...really like him, especially for someone I just met yesterday."

Elliot stared at Jack for a few seconds before nodding his head, setting aside the note and the box on the counter. "You met him...yesterday."

"Yes."

"And you want to send him chocolates?"

"Look, don't question it. I don't know if I'll be able to visit him at the shop for a little while. Tomorrow I have to take care of the orphans and do a bit of work for Mr. ManSnoozie at his book store. It'll take at least an hour to get from the orphanage to North's Emporium, and with a bunch of kids on my hands, it'd be a very time consuming and very stressful task for me to accomplish. Not to mention Mother Gothel is coming back the day after tomorrow."

Jack kept Elliot in his determined gaze. And Elliot didn't budge for a few moments, but he seemed to have a change of heart as he picked up the note to reread it.

_ "Hey, Hiccup. I hope you haven't been slipping on any stuffed animals outside of my company. I'd hate it if you ever broke a limb._

_ Believe it or not, this is from that boy Jack you met the other day. I know this is ridiculously cheesy and sudden - and quite possibly creepy (now that I think about it, there's no 'possibly' to add, this is just plain creepy) - but I'd like to spend more time with you and get to know you more if that isn't too much trouble. I think you're a really interesting person and your mind seems so amazing._

_ I can't exactly visit you within the next week at your shop because of its distance from my home and other circumstances I will not disclose, but if you meet me tomorrow at Warren Park near that large water fountain around 5 pm we might be able to connect a little more._

_ Please don't disregard this. I'll be really sad. You don't want

that right? Or maybe you do because you don't actually like me._

_ But whatever, it's up to you._

_ I hope I see you tomorrow._

_ - Jack Frost_

_ P.S. Your freckles are adorable. Just saying. Okay bye._

Elliot looked back up at Jack, before letting out another sigh. "You seem so genuinely interested in this bugger, so I'll do it."

Jack grinned from ear to ear, an honest look of happiness and relief on his face. "Thanks, Bunnymund! You're the greatest -" And Jack stopped himself, the smile falling off his face. "And I never said that last part."

Bunnymund only chuckled, his shoulders heaving up and down as he crossed his arms. "Whatever, mate. You gotta go home before the kids wake up."

"Right," Jack said, laughing through his words. He started out the door, waving. "See you around, cottontail!"

The boy danced out the store, and the Pooka watched him dash across the street, running the back of his hand across the top of his forehead.

"Still don't know why I tolerate 'em..."

* * *

><p>"Ye've got t'be kidding me," Merida said, covering her mouth to stifle her laughter. "Chocolates?"<p>

Hiccup frowned at Merida. "Please don't make fun of this."

Sitting in his hands was the gift given to him by none other than Jack Frost, the rather dreamy fellow that saved his life yesterday (he'd like to think his life depended on him, anyway). A heart shaped box of assorted E. Aster Bunnymund chocolates, something Hiccup never had the pleasure of trying before in his time in Burgess.

"This Jack Frost is quite th'charmer," Merida clasped her hands together, ignoring Hiccup's last request. "Fallin' in love with ye after one encounter!" She broke into laughter once again. "If only he knew how much o' a dork ye are in real life."

"Oh, trust me," Hiccup switched his focus onto the note he received along with the chocolate earlier in the hour, still unsure of what to think of this offering. "He knows."

Merida shrugged and began to walk across the parlor, pretending to be interested in the map of Hiccup's home on the wall. It was currently stationed in the sky above the upper class section of Berk, and it was a magnificent vessel .

Merida desired to be the captain of a flying ship of her own one day. Of course, her dream would be one step closer to becoming realized if

her mother would actually let her board one on her own...

The redhead heiress was the daughter of Duke Fergus and Duchess Elinor of DunBroch, and they were close friends with Baron Stoick of Berk.

They had come by for a brief conference with Stoick. Apparently a large celebration was in the plans, and guests from Berk, Burgess and DunBroch were all invited . Duke Manny of Burgess - as the people of Burgess affectionately call him - was arranging this celebration as all three 'kingdoms' had been getting along well for the past decade.

This celebration was to take place in a month. A lengthy period of time between the announcement and the actual event most likely meant it was going to be large and extravagant, especially with Duke Manny behind it all. It would also be the first time many would see Duke Manny in the flesh, as he hardly ever revealed himself in public.

Merida only saw this conference between her parents and Stoick as an opportunity to talk with Hiccup, one of her closest (and only) friends. And that's exactly what she did - what she didn't expect, however, was for Hiccup to have a potential, male love interest.

"So does that mean yer g'nna go through with it?" Merida asked, watching as Hiccup chewed on one of the chocolates.

"Gods, this is delicious," Hiccup wore an unreadable expression on his face as he consumed the candy, and Merida crossed her arms. "Uh-I mean. I don't know."

"Do y' even like the boy?"

"...Maybe, I kinda liked the conversations we had yesterday, but I don't like him like that, it's too soon-

"Quit makin' excuses and go," Merida said, chuckling afterwards. "It'd be the first unique experience you'd have here in Burgess. No matter how stupid it was t' send chocolates, I think he really likes ya. He sounds really sweet,"

Hiccup laughed along with her. "I suppose you're right."

"Of course, I've been wrong before..." Merida pointed a finger at Hiccup. "Just don't get yerself int'a any trouble, y'hear me? Can't afford t'lose you to some creepy stalker."

"If it helps you feel any better, you could come with me tomorrow. Or at least watch from a distance," Hiccup said, smiling at Merida. "You're a pro at archery. I've never seen someone shoot arrows like you do. You'd make a good bodyguard."

"Hm. Maybe I should. I'll be hidin' in the bushes, " Merida said, taking a chocolate from his box without permission and throwing it in her mouth. She seemed to stare at the box in disbelief seconds later. "...ye were right about these chocolates, Hiccup. This tastes amazing."

"Hiding in the bushes really isn't necessary..."

"I wouldn't want to interrupt yer date with destiny. C'n I have another one?"

Hiccup gave her the box. "Knock yourself out."

Merida's eyes lit up, eagerly taking the box from his hands and plopping down on a nearby chair. Hiccup rolled his eyes and redirected his attention to the note in his hand.

_ 'Gods, he's so dumb,' _ He thought to himself as he went over the words Jack wrote on the page almost illegibly. That might have been cute to some people. It seemed like he was in a rush.

He found himself reading over the note a second and a third time, however, and sighed, sinking lower in the seat he was sitting in.

_ 'I'm probably dumber for wanting to see him again.' _

* * *

><p>please review, i'd like to see some opinions!</p>

and if there's anything that doesn't make sense, don't hesitate to ask. :

4. Pigeon Toed

hi guys!

so sorry for not updating in a loooooong time but i have been on hiatus due to academic and personal struggle (i hope you all understand)(i really do)

i'd like to thank everyone who reviewed and followed and favorited and just. wow. you all are really great. and you're wonderful motivation for me to keep it up, and yeah. thank you!

this chapter is pretty short and unbetal'd and i apologize for that ahead of time, but nevertheless, i hope you enjoy part one of hiccup and jack's little outing. :')

* * *

><p>"Just dandy, Jack..." The orphan boy told himself, leaping off the back of a moving vehicle. The man driving the steam-powered truck didn't notice the teenage boy hopping on (or off) for a free ride, much to Jack's good fortune, but of course, that only temporarily satiated Jack.

He landed right in front of the entrance to Warren Park and dusted himself off. "Absolutely great. You're late to your own date."

Well. If Hiccup even bothered to show up, of course.

He sighed and glanced at the tall clock located next to the front entrance - ten minutes after five.

He cursed under his breath and took off down the pathway, the fountain within a feasible running distance. He couldn't make out whether or not his freckled boy of interest was there, and there was a part of Jack that was afraid to find out.

He'd hate to blame showing up minutes late on Toothiana, but...as it turns out, that might be the main reason he was running late. She volunteered to watch the children after closing down her shop early - and although Toothiana's well organized, she's easily distracted by something that intrigues her interest. Next thing you know, she caught herself setting up various dental appointments for a few beggars on the street.

...And sure, okay. Even when Toothiana came knocking at the orphanage's front door, Jack didn't open it until he finished the round of hide and seek he was playing with the kids.

So perhaps that was more of a _team _effort.

Regardless, Jack was in Warren Park now and that was all that mattered. Unless, of course, Hiccup wasn't there.

And as Jack coasted to a stop, he realized.

No one was there waiting for him, aside from a flock of pigeons and an old woman in a cape on a bench tossing bread at them.

Jack could feel his heart sink not a moment later, the anger and disappointment he felt towards himself weighing down on him even more. He let out a groan of frustration, kicking at the rocks on the pavement below him and plopping down on the same spot seconds later.

"I'm so stupid..." He shoved his head in his hands, fingers clutching at the side of his head. "What was I even thinking? Why did I ever believe he'd even _consider..._"

Jack stopped himself mid sentence, hearing a small chattering noise.

Wait.

He looked up at the old woman next to him on the bench, currently covering her mouth with her pale white hand.

She was _snickering._

And Jack was _very_ offended.

"Pardon me, miss," Jack returned to his feet, getting closer to the old woman. "But are you-are you _laughing_ at me?"

The woman immediately tossed her head backward in laughter, causing the large hood covering her face to fall away, and from this action, Jack could see that this...this _definitely _wasn't an old woman.

In fact, she was rather young, with a round face and enormous bright red, curly hair. Jack could probably compare it to that of a lion's mane. Her freckled face began turning shades of red as she began running out of breath and stomping her feet, which frightened the

pigeons into fleeing the scene.

"Ay, that was a good laugh, eh?" The red head wiped a tear from her eye, finally settling herself down. "Yer pathetic, ye know that?" She said, glancing up at Jack with bright blue eyes, who, in turn, glared at her.

"Wow. Thanks. And who are you?"

"Merida. Merida Dunbroch. Nice to meet ye, Jack." She held out a hand for him to shake, but he refused it. She simply shrugged.

"Well, Merida. I'd like to know why you're dressed like this, why is my misery so amusing to you, and why -" His eyes widened. "...I didn't tell you my name yet."

"Ye didn't need to." Merida giggled. "I already know who ye are, Hiccup told m-"

"Hiccup?" Jack's eyes briefly lit up, "W-wait. You know him?"

"Of course. 'M his best friend."

"Best friend?" The teenage boy began surveying the environment around them, "Is he here with you?"

Merida crossed her legs, turning towards Jack and resting her arm on the back of the bench. She smirked and raised an eyebrow curiously at him, which in turn made Jack feel very, very anxious. "And this is precisely why I called ye pathetic. Why are ye so infatuated with this boy, Jack? He's practically a stranger."

"I don't know, I..." Jack suddenly blinked, his face turning a shade of red. "Why is it any of your business? Why are you even here, are you his bodyguard too or something?"

"More or less, ye could say that." The red head pulled out her bow and arrow from underneath her cape, making sure Jack could see the details of the bow and how sharp the arrow was.

Jack swallowed rather audibly. He'd always been able to get himself into some sort of trouble, but he never imagined giving a boy he liked chocolate would get him killed.

"Merida!"

Hiccup's voice (also known as what sounded like absolute music to Jack's ears) approached the two of them from behind, and they both turned around, although Jack did so reluctantly.

Jack didn't know what to say as Hiccup approached him. "You, uh...Well. Uh. I-I met your best friend."

The freckled boy noticed the disturbed look on Jack's face, and he crossed his arms at Merida.

"I wasn't goin' t'kill him!" Merida whined, getting up from her seat on the bench.

"I told you I wanted to meet him first before you attempted

anything!" Hiccup said, standing in front of Jack. Jack's eyes only widened in horror at what Hiccup just implied. "What's with the bow and arrow?!"

"I just like t'show off. This bag o' bones meant no harm anyways," Merida waved Jack off, who...really couldn't believe what was happening at the moment.

"I'll deal with you later, Merida. Go...go do that thing that you do when we're not hanging out."

"W'tever," Merida scoffed, before running towards the entrance to the park. "I'll just see what Burgess has in store fer me. This is only m'second time visiting. But ye gotta meet me back here in two hours, we both have a curfew, remember?"

"Yes, yes. Bye, have fun." Hiccup sighed, before turning to Jack. "I am so...so _so_ very sorry you just had to go through that traumatic experience," Hiccup chuckled nervously as Jack stared down at him with a blank expression.

Hiccup heard Merida say something along the lines of "ay, it was his idea!" but she was too far gone for him to acknowledge the statement with a response.

The freckled boy continued, shaking his head. "Please, please...just, forget that ever happened. I dropped my pocket watch while walking here and didn't notice and I had to go back and get it and I didn't mean to leave you alone with her. And just...Merida is quite the fiery personality, it's a wonder how I even became friends with her..."

Jack nodded, the information Hiccup was giving to him slowly but surely being processed in his mind. "It's fine, It's fine..." Jack said finally, laughing a bit. "And I understand why she's here anyway. Better safe than sorry, I could've been an axe murderer or something."

"Yeah...right." Hiccup took two steps backward before taking a seat on the bench.

There was an awkward silence, and neither of them managed to make eye contact with each other for at least thirty seconds.

"...Well. This is all _so_ very interesting..."

"What?" Jack asked. "Oh, sorry...I. Well." He sat on the bench next to Hiccup. "Truth be told, I'm not sure what to do next."

"Thought you'd have it all planned out since you sent me the note. With the chocolates and everything. Such a well executed invitation only to be let down by the _entire_ event itself..." Hiccup trailed off before looking at Jack, who gave him a very troubled look in return.

The smaller boy immediately found himself tense. "Oh, gods, Jack, I'm sorry. I tend to be very sarcastic at least 92% of the time even though I_ really_ shouldn't be..." Hiccup rolled his eyes. "It's turned into a habit of mine. It's just my way of dealing with...things."

Jack chuckled, leaning back into the bench. "Ah, I know. I just wanted to see what your reaction would be."

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "I'm sure that's what they all say."

"No, I'm serious." Jack's eyes averted from the fountain to Hiccup's eyes, "You're cute when you're nervous."

Hiccup didn't know how to respond to the intimate eye contact, so after a few seconds of panicking on the inside, he simply shrunk backwards. "Ahaha...well. Do you think you'll be able to come up with something soon here or is this gonna be as boring as I thought it would be?"

"Maybe it won't be so boring if we did something you liked. What do you want to do?" Jack asked, leaning toward him. "You've only been in Burgess for just a few days, I can't imagine you've explored the entire city yet."

"I, uh..." Too many thoughts were running through Hiccup's head, particularly thoughts concerning how close this handsome, blue eyed boy was in proximity to him. "I...guess we could head towards the market. Maybe. I might find some things there unavailable downtown..."

"Well. As long as Merida isn't there to start anything, I'm up for it." Jack replied. Hiccup gave Jack an endearing, lopsided smile and Jack's heart swelled at the sight.

"So how much time have we wasted so far?" Hiccup inquired, looking up at the sky above them. "The sun looks like it wants to set."

"You're the one with the pocket watch." Jack pointed to the golden circle on the other boy's vest.

"Oh! Yep. I mean...yeah...It's uh," Hiccup glanced at the trinket, squinting a bit. "It's seventeen minutes after five, now."

"Then we've still got plenty of time," Jack reassured, taking a hold of Hiccup's hand. "Let's go."

Hiccup was starstruck momentarily as he was pulled to his feet, feeling the unfamiliar texture of another boy's fingers laced between his own. It was new and odd but he liked it, and he liked how cold Jack felt against his skin, and he liked the large smile on Jack's face, and he liked how eager he was to begin this...date. Or whatever it happened to be.

He didn't know why he was so drawn to some complete stranger. Jack is a raggedy teenager with aged clothing and dirt stains located on various parts of his anatomy - for all he knew, he shouldn't even be associating with him, considering the fact that it was taboo for one of his class to interact on a close level with someone of the lower class.

'But wow, when have I ever obeyed the rules.' Hiccup thought to himself.

He had to stifle his own laughter as Jack tripped over his own

footing in his excitement.

None of his anxious thinking and second guessing mattered. It was too late to care.

End
file.